

**Municipal Review Committee  
Planning & Zoning Conference Room**

**January 24, 2005  
7:00 p.m.**

**Municipal Review Committee Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2005**

**Attendance:**

Phil Sgamma, MRC Chairman  
Lou Depowski, MRC Member  
Rich McNamara, MRC Member  
Jim Callahan  
Anne Case, Deputy Supervisor  
Joe Weiss, Town Councilman  
Joanne Pickering  
Amy Barron

Paul Shear, MRC Member  
Matt Balling, MRC Member  
Dan Michnik, MRC Member  
Jim Hartz  
Jeff Grenzebach, Planning Board Liaison  
Sandy Skaine  
Jennifer Barron  
Elizabeth Smolka

**Minutes of the December 13, 2004 meeting**

**ACTION:** Motion by Paul Shear, seconded by Lou Depowski, that the board accepts the minutes of the last meeting as official.

**VOTING:** Ayes: Sgamma, Depowski, Michnik, Shear, Balling, McNamara  
Absent: Moulin **MOTION PASSED**

**Old Business**

**Agenda Item I – Walgreen’s Pharmacy**

Jim Callahan updated the board on some of the correspondence that the department received. DEC and ECDPW have sent some initial responses. There will need to be some soils investigated to determine the exact wetland boundaries.

**ACTION:** Motion by Dan Michnik, seconded by Rich McNamara, that the board table this item until all information has been submitted from DEC and the Army Corps of Engineers.

**QUESTION:** Phil Sgamma said that this item will not be rescheduled until all items have been submitted to the Planning and Zoning Department.

**VOTING:** Ayes: Sgamma, Depowski, Michnik, Shear, Balling, McNamara  
Absent: Moulin **MOTION PASSED**

**Agenda Item II – Demolition Permit at 5329 Green Valley Drive**

Joanna Pickering gave a presentation on the history of the Lieb/Munschauer/Pieper Residence located at 5329 Green Valley Drive. The home was originally built in 1842. There is a map from 1890 that shows a private drive connecting Goodrich and Greiner Roads. The home is a great example of Greek Revival Architecture, which was popular in the United States after the War of 1812 until the 1860’s. One of the greatest features of the home is its gabled roof with a low pitch and horizontal cornice lines underneath the roof. One of the unique features of the home is that it is asymmetrical in design with two sets of windows on the left-hand side and a

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**January 24, 2005  
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single set on the right-hand side. The windows have wide stone lintels that were likely cut from the limestone ledge directly across the road. There are pictures that show an active quarry operated by Jacob Byler.

The window openings measure eighteen inches deep, because of the three courses of brick used in the wall construction. The doorway features a full transom with side light windows and wood panels beneath. The rear door remains with the original copper threshold. The foundation has a limestone “water table” that separates the foundation from the wall construction. Although the home has been painted over, the original bricks were made of Ransom Creek clay and burned in Clarence Center. The process of making bricks was very labor intensive and took many months to make. The first step was removing the clay from the soil and allowing it to dry over the winter months. The following spring it was sifted to remove any loose rocks. Water was added and mixed by hand to the correct consistency. Then the clay was poured into forms and taken to level beds of sand to air dry. The forms were then sent to the kilns to heat gradually up to 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit. This entire process took approximately 3-4 weeks including gradual cooling. With three courses of brick in the walls of the Leib house, imagine how long this took.

There were photographs presented showing the members of the families and a brief history of the family as described in The History of Clarence, New York, written by Diane Baker.

Joanna Pickering also said that there was a “Sister House” built for Elizabeth Leib who married David Martin. That home is the current Urban Brothers funeral home located at 5895 Goodrich Road. It is a symmetrical design, as opposed to the asymmetrical design of the original. There is a rare grouping of Greek Revival home designs with little ornamentation in the Town of Clarence that represent the Mennonite philosophy. These homeowners were founding members of the Mennonite Church in Clarence and led relatively simple lives. Removing one of these houses diminishes the quality of them all. Joanna said that the native products used to construct this home made and make this the oldest Town in Erie County. She said our very heritage is at stake here. Saving this building is equally as important as saving the native plant species on the Onondaga Escarpment. Those plants indigenous only in this area have been protected by the Nature Conservancy. We have an equal obligation to protect this building. The Leib house is a Clarence vernacular and needs to be preserved. Structurally, this building is sound. This restored home can have value in the future. The Town could provide tax incentives for properties like this to help restore their historical significance.

Sandy Skaine gave the board some additional information on the recent history when the Pieper’s owned the home and its current condition. She said that it appears that there has been some advance or preparatory demolition work done already.

Matt Balling mentioned that one of the objectives of the comprehensive plan is to preserve and protect isolated landmarks, which support the community character, and also further stated from the SEQRA Law the issue of a positive declaration to be issued when a project presents a material conflict with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Balling then asked Joanna Pickering from the Historical Society whether she felt this structure was an isolated landmark of significance. Mrs. Pickering replied yes.

**ACTION:** Motion by Matt Balling, seconded by Lou Depowski, that the board table this item until they receive a full EAF Part I, in accordance with SEQRA regulations for Type I Actions.

**Municipal Review Committee  
Planning & Zoning Conference Room**

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VOTING: Ayes: Sgamma, Balling, Depowski, Michnik, McNamara  
Nays: None  
Abstain: Shear

MOTION PASSED

**Agenda Item III – Proposed Subdivision Law Amendment**

Jim Callahan handed out copies of the proposed subdivision law and the EAF Part I.

ACTION: Motion by Lou Depowski, seconded by Dan Michnik, that the board recommend that the Town Board seek Lead Agency status for this Type I Action and begin the minimum 30-day comment period.

VOTING: Ayes: Sgamma, Depowski, Michnik, Shear, Balling, McNamara  
Absent: Moulin

MOTION PASSED

**Agenda Item IV – Barbalato Open Development Area**

This item was tabled due to outstanding issues regarding the wetland delineation.

New Business

Agenda Item I – Visone Hotel and Retail Complex, 8766 Main Street.

Jim Callahan presented a brief description of the project to the board. The board tabled the item due to a lack of an EAF Part I.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

The next MRC meeting will be held on Monday, February 28, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. with a 6:30 p.m. Work Session.